

Memorandum

DATE: September 11, 2009
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Board And Commission Memo July 2009

Thank you to the Board and Commissions that have submitted information as a follow-up to their Board and Commission actions and meetings in August. Information for the September memo will be due by September 28, 2009 and posted on Friday October 2, 2009.

Below is information from Board and Commission Chairs on Northfield board and commission items of interest:

Arts & Culture Commission

Submitted by Philip Spensely, Chair

The Arts and Culture Commission announces, thanks to a final financial donation from one of its members, that Jennifer Wolcott's "Dancers" sculpture will be given a permanent installation outside the library. Commission task forces continue to explore means to display art in City Hall, to define processes for the installation of sidewalk poetry, to establish an annual "Northfield Living Treasures" award in recognition of exceptional contribution to arts and culture, and to inaugurate a HS sculpture contest. As well the Commission maintains its support of the Library expansion, long term planning for the area between the library and the Grand, the development of the River Walk Arts Quarter, and the establishment of a marketing website being developed by the Watering Hole for the Arts collaborative.

Environmental Quality Commission

Submitted by Daniel Jones, Chair

The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) continued its review of the Land Development Code (LDC) sections relating to environmental issues. With the exception of a few remaining pieces of information to be provided to staff, the EQC review of the LDC is complete. The EQC will continue to remain responsive to the City Council and Planning Commission regarding LDC issues.

Historical Preservation Commission

Submitted by Margaret Lee, Board Member

Four signs were approved:

1. 305 Water St - Salon Synergy
2. 307 Water St - Froggy Bottom
3. 306 Division St - Fit to be TRYed
4. 314 Division - Rooms by Tagg 2

We heard reports on the status of the Way Park local historic designation, and the status of the railroad station building. It was decided to study a block of East 4th Street to see what recommendations we should make for next year's street improvements. All who can make a meeting are to gather by the 1st National Bank building on Friday, August 28th at Noon.

Human Rights Commission

Submitted by Commissioner Davison

Our August meeting was held on a special scheduled date with required publication.

A. Considerable time was taken listening to a citizen COMPLAINT of unfair treatment alleging discrimination in housing. Action was approved that two Commission members secure additional information from the other party, from other sources, access willingness to resolve the situation, and report back to the Commission. Two Commission members volunteered for this assignment.

B. Our major effort at this time is the 2010 CENSUS COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE. Action was approved to attempt to establish a task force to broaden our scope, efforts, and participation. Organizations to be asked to participate include The League of Women Voters, Carleton College, Saint Olaf College, and any other interested and appropriate groups. We reviewed plans to provide information at public events such as the following:

1. Greenvale Apartments "Night Out", August 4th (already completed)
2. City wide "Night To Unite" on Water Street, August 4th (already completed)
3. Youth Activity Fairs (two), August 19th
4. Defeat of Jesse James Days parade, September 13th
5. International Day of Peace, September 20th
6. Northfield Winter Walk
7. Martin Luther King Celebration, January 2010
8. Events at Saint Olaf College
9. Events at Carleton College
10. Thursday's Table
11. Senior Citizens Center
12. Senior Dining site
13. Other dates that we become aware of.

In addition we plan to establish contacts in the five target groups, to identify and recruit persons who would be effective spokes-persons in each group.

C. In other action it was approved to contact still another non-profit organization to serve as FISCAL AGENT for the Human Rights Commission and to handle contributions and disbursements in support of our Martin Luther King Celebration.

Library Board

Submitted by Margit Johnson, Chair

New Board Members

We are pleased to have Jerry Bilek join the library board to complete Bill Bruihler's term through December 2010. His experience in the book trade on Division Street will be an asset to the board.

Bruce Colwell, who served on the library for several terms, recently moved to Virginia, so we are looking for another board member to complete that term, which ends in December 2011.

Planning

The staff has issued the RFP for a fundraising feasibility consultant to determine how much private funding within the next 3 years is possible for the library expansion. We hope to hire a consultant by the end of October, develop a list of potential large donors and complete our preliminary case statement by December, and begin interviews in January 2010. We will return to the City Council by late winter/early spring with the results of our study.

The proposed design charrette for the area between 2nd and 5th Streets along Washington has widespread verbal support, but no funding yet. The EDA is working on bringing Holland, Michigan's urban planner Bill Johnson back to Northfield in November 2009 for a framework planning session. That would push the design charrette into early winter 2010. Individuals on the EDA have expressed interest in the charrette, but

the EDA as a body has not yet committed the ca. \$5,200 needed to fund the 3-day workshop. Perhaps the mayor can work with the EDA to realize that council goal early in 2010.

Library Use

Even though the library was open 29 fewer hours in July 2009, compared to July 2008, circulation increased from 139 items to 156 items per hour. The staff plans to continue the reduction of hours (8 PM M-Th closing instead of 9 PM, closed Sundays) into the academic year to save money. July's circulation numbers suggest that the use of the library will become more concentrated into the hours when the library is open. With the elimination of part time and substitute staff, the full time staff will be working more to meet the needs of library users.

Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use

Submitted by Joan Janusz, Co-Chairs

The Mayor's Task Force continues to be active in raising awareness of prescription drug abuse in Rice County. As the flagship portion of this project, a coalition of local partners is working to establish drop boxes in the Northfield and Faribault Police Stations for community members to safely and anonymously drop off unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medicines. The boxes should be open on September 22, 2009, and will then be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. This month, the Mayor's Task Force helped to staff a booth at the Rice County Fair, educating community members about this program. Partners in this "Take It to THE BOX" effort include the Northfield Police Department, the Northfield Hospital, District One Hospital, the Faribault Police Department, the Rice County Chemical Health Coalition, Rice County Public Health, and the Rice County Sheriff's Office.

The Mayor's Task Force published its monthly column in July in the *Northfield News* on the "Take It to THE BOX" initiative. On July 30, a Task Force member and Northfield Police Chief Mark Taylor will be interviewed on KYMN radio about this program.

At its July meeting, the Mayor's Task Force heard from Dr. Roger Jenni, the Northfield Public Schools' Coordinator of Testing and Assessment. Dr. Jenni reported on the results of the 2009 Northfield Student Survey, which is given to Northfield youth in grades 6, 8, 9, and 11. The survey measures the percentage of local youth who use drugs and alcohol, as well as the presence of risk and protective factors in their lives. The Survey is available to anyone who would like to see it by contacting HCI at (507) 664-3524.

The Mayor's Task Force is partnering with Tom Graupmann (Northfield High School Activities Director) on an effort to bring John Underwood from the American Athletic Institute to Northfield on September 1. Mr. Underwood will discuss the physical, psychological and physiological effects of drugs and alcohol on athletic performance with Northfield High School athletes, coaches, teachers, and parents/community members.

cc: Board & Commission Chairs
Department Managers